AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

At page 1, line 2, delete Description and insert and center:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

At page 1, please replace the second full paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

A process of the generic type and a corresponding apparatus are known from ~~US 6 508 158~~US 6 508 138. The known process is not yet optimum because, in the case of checking formations of articles, with articles positioned incorrectly to a certain extent, e.g. skewed cigarettes, the formation was evaluated as correct overall. Furthermore, a change in the format - in the length - of the articles, up until now, required mechanical adaptation of the testing apparatus.

At page 1, between the second and third paragraphs, insert and center:

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

At page 2, line 3, before the first full paragraph, insert and center:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

At page 2, line 25, before the last paragraph beginning with "Figure 1 shows...", insert and center:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

At page 11, please replace the second full paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

The individual actuating signals 31 detected for each testing element 20 are added to give cumulative frequency curves 42, 43, 44, 45, as is illustrated in Figure 5. In comparison with Figure 3b, the height of the respective cumulative frequency curve 42-45 is nevertheless lower since, in the case of twenty cigarettes 12 in a cigarette formation, a maximum of twenty actuating signals 31 are triggered by the associated twenty push rods 21 of the respective testing element 20 and the respective cumulative frequency curve 42-45 thus has a maximum height of twenty units. The check of the cumulative frequency curves 42-46 in respect of exceeding or dropping below certain start, maximum and threshold values 37, 38, 39, e.g. within an interval defined by limit values 32, 33, corresponds to the check which has already been described with reference to Figure 3b. Accordingly, an excessively narrow cumulative frequency curve, e.g. the cumulative frequency curve 43 identified by triangles, indicates a cigarette formation with cigarettes 12 which are too short, and an excessively wide cumulative frequency curve, e.g. the cumulative frequency curve 44 identified by circle symbols, indicates a cigarette formation with cigarettes 12 which are too long. A cigarette formation with cigarettes 12 which satisfy the predetermined criteria has a cumulative frequency curve with a rapid rise, which, in respect of width, lies between the two cumulative frequency curves 43, 44 which indicate a defective cigarette formation, that is to say, for example, a cumulative frequency curve 42, as is illustrated by solid lines in Figure 5. Figure 5 also illustrates a cumulative frequency curve 45 which is identified by square symbols and is produced, for example, if, in a cigarette formation, one cigarette 12 is skewed in particular in front of the end sides of the other cigarettes 12, that is to say, for example, a cigarette which has been introduced only part of the way and then broken off. In this

case, a large number of push rods ~~31~~ 21 of the respective testing element 20 strike against the broken cigarette at a relatively early stage, thus giving rise to the illustrated expansion of the cumulative frequency curve 45. Using the shape of the cumulative frequency curve 45, it is thus also possible to draw conclusions about the defect present in each case.